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ABSTRACT

Two Louisiana community colleges--Bossier Parish Community College (BPCC) and Delgado Community College (DCC)--proposed, developed, and implemented a collaborative Pharmacy Technician program for delivery through the use of two-way interactive video. The new program was inspired by new certification requirements instituted by the state of Louisiana in 1997. BPCC and DCC both determined that the new certification requirements established a need for a Pharmacy Technician training program in higher education. The program utilizes instructional media provided to all Louisiana colleges and universities by the Louisiana Board of Regents (BoR). The use of such instructional media would serve to decrease costs, utilize new technology, and make the professional courses in the program available to other schools in the state via compressed video. The BPCC/DCC Pharmacy Technician Program was made available at the two schools in the 1999-2000 academic year. The one-year certificate program incorporates academic and clinical education in pharmacy practices and includes academic instruction in human anatomy and physiology, medical terminology, and elemental chemistry. The laboratory courses are taught on campus in a lab setting, while the lecture courses are delivered via compressed video. The lectures are developed through collaboration between BPCC and DCC. In recognition of the innovative and collaborative efforts of BPCC and DCC, the BoR awarded the two schools a Distance Learning Initiative Grant of $70,000. (NB)

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Bossier Parish Community College and Delgado Community College

Collaborative Pharmacy Technician Program

Distance Education Initiative

In a spirit of collegiality, Bossier Parish Community College (BPCC) in Bossier City, Louisiana, and Delgado Community College (DCC) in New Orleans, Louisiana, proposed, developed, and implemented a cooperative Pharmacy Technician program for delivery through the use of two-way interactive video. While separated by 350 miles, the colleges each have colleges of pharmacy within close proximity of their institutions. The University of Louisiana - Monroe College of Pharmacy and Xavier University College of Pharmacy (New Orleans) were supportive in the development and implementation of this program at the respective area community colleges. This is the first approved Pharmacy Technician program in higher education as well as the first collaborative program of its kind utilizing compressed video in the state of Louisiana. This program simultaneously addresses the needs of the students, the needs of the medical community, as well as preventing the unnecessary duplication of academic programs.

With the passage of Chapter 8 of the Professional and Occupational Standards of the *State of Louisiana* (R.S.37: 1178) in October of 1997, certification requirements for pharmacy technicians were established. Approximately 2600 pharmacy technicians were "grandfathered" into the profession; however after the spring of 1998, grandfathering was no longer an option. Certification was required through the completion of a Louisiana Board of Pharmacy-approved program for pharmacy technicians. In view of these new

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requirements, BPCC and DCC each determined there was a need for a Pharmacy Technician training program in the higher education setting.

Each college worked independently to submit the Pharmacy Technician program proposals to the Louisiana Board of Supervisors for State Colleges and Universities and the Louisiana Board of Regents (BoR) during the 1998-1999 academic year. During the proposal phase, BPCC and DCC personnel began discussions about the possibility of developing a collaborative program utilizing new distance learning technology provided to all public colleges and universities by the BoR. It was determined that the use of such instructional media would decrease costs, utilize new technology, and make the pharmacy technician professional courses in the program available to other colleges and universities in the state via compressed video in the future. Both boards approved the programs in spring, 1999. The programs were implemented on each campus for the 1999-2000 academic year.

The BPCC/DCC Pharmacy Technician Program is a one-year certificate program, which incorporates academic and clinical education in pharmacy practices. The program includes academic instruction in human anatomy and physiology, medical terminology, and elemental chemistry. Professional courses include instruction and training in pharmacology, pharmacy calculations, preparing and dispensing drugs, and classification of drugs. In addition, emphasis is placed on administrative skills, pharmacy law and ethics, and inventory control. The curriculum content, including didactic and clinical education, provides excellent preparation for employment as pharmacy technicians. The

core academic courses are taught using traditional instructional methods at each institution. The professional lecture courses are delivered through the use of compressed video in an electronic classroom setting. The professional laboratory courses are taught in a laboratory setting on each respective campus, BPCC and DCC have shared in the responsibility for development, delivery, and evaluation of each professional lecture course. In addition, the colleges have also shared in the selection of textbooks, development of pharmacy technician laboratory exercises, determination of appropriate laboratory equipment, and development of clinical sites and evaluations.

The professional courses which are shared between the two campuses via compressed video include: **Pharmacology for Allied Health, Pharmaceutical Dosage Calculations & Measurement, Introduction to Pharmacy, Pharmacy Practice 1, Applied Clinical Pharmacology, Sterile Products, Pharmacy Practice 11, Trends in Pharmacy, and Pharmacy Seminar**. BPCC and DCC reciprocate in the sending and receiving of these courses. Each student is enrolled at their respective institutions. Tuition is paid and credit is received at the college at which the student is enrolled. Course numbering at each institution is essentially the same. Each institution maintains its own tuition and fee structure. There is no additional cost for delivery of the compressed video courses because the two institutions have agreed to share equally in the number of courses that are being received and sent with no exchange of funds.

The goal of the cooperative pharmacy tech program is to provide the healthcare community with quality pharmacy technicians for the retail and hospital clinical

pharmacy fields utilizing distance learning technology. As pharmacists are required to devote more time and effort to patient consultation, the need for qualified pharmacy technicians continues to increase. The pharmacy technician is rapidly becoming a well-defined position in the pharmacy setting. Upon successful completion of this collaborative program, our graduates will be eligible to take the national certification examination administered by the Pharmacy Technician Certification Board (PTCB). The first class of 15 students will graduate in May 2000.

BPCC and Delgado were recently awarded a Distance Learning Initiative Grant for $70,000.00.by the Louisiana Board of Regents. The Board of Regents recognized the innovative and collaborative efforts of BPCC and DCC in using distance learning technology. The grant enables BPCC and DCC to expedite the development of a quality educational program for Pharmacy Technician training. The grant has provided financial resources for equipment, staff and faculty training, temporary clerical and technical support, and consultation to assist in program development.

Through the support of the college personnel and the BoR grant, BPCC and DCC intend to make the Pharmacy Technician program available by the Louisiana Compressed Video Network to other post-secondary institutions throughout Louisiana by the 2000-2001 academic year. Continuation of this collaborative partnership will allow for quality, innovative training for Pharmacy Technicians students throughout the state of Louisiana.

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